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A Meritorious Record

One of the striking features of the Territorial public works is the amount of roadwork that has been done during the past year or perhaps a little less. It is one of the things a person who has been away from Honolulu for some time, notices on returning. It is one of the most important features in the growth and development of the city.

The amount of road work that has been done and the thoroughness of it is a most flattering testimonial to the efficiency of the road department under the present administration.

The road work in Honolulu has been under the direction and control of Sam Johnson, the Road Supervisor, and he has shown himself a most efficient and energetic official. During his administration of the office, more road work has been done than was ever done before in twice the time, and it has been done at a less rate of expense than was ever secured before. Mr. Johnson took hold of the office at a time when the finances of the Territory were on the verge of a breakdown. For years the legislature had been in the habit of making appropriations without any relation to probable revenue, until, soon after George R. Carter became governor, things reached a crisis. The Territory got to a point where its revenues would scarcely maintain its mere machinery, let alone provide material with which that machinery could accomplish results. It is a part of the history of Governor Carter's administration, how he met that crisis. The legislature at his request, did that which the legislature alone could do, and a system or retrenchment, and efficiency was adopted in the executive department which has successfully met the situation.

In this scheme of retrenchment and efficiency, Sam Johnson has played an important part. Taking hold of the road department in which scandal, extravagance and inefficiency had been notorious, at a time when funds available for its work were at the lowest ebb, he immediately put an end to scandal and extravagance, and introduced such efficiency as was probably never known before in Hawaiian public works. In the words of a famous New York City official of national eminence for efficiency, where he "found two men working with one pick, he discharged one of the men." This was a complete reversal of the policy which had apparently been followed by some of his predecessors, who under similar circumstances instead of discharging the extra man, discharged the solitary pick.

At any rate, Sam Johnson went ahead cutting his garment to fit his cloth. That is he reduced expenses to come within available funds. Fewer men were employed, but the discharges were largely in the force of lunas and not in the force of workers. He found an average of one luna to two workers. He changed this radically. The effect was seen at once. Smaller gangs of men increased individual efficiency, and with a much reduced force, work was simultaneously carried on in a larger number of places.

The result of this is visible to anyone who will take the trouble to go about the city. Roads and streets have been improved in every part of town. Streets through thickly settled regions which had been neglected for years, have been put into shape. Improvement was not restricted, as is popularly believed to have been the case under some former administrations, to streets where the pressure from rich and influential citizens compelled something to be done. But it was carried on wherever there was need for it and the funds available would permit.

Sam Johnson has been accused of being more active in politics than George William Curtis and some of his confreres of the Civil Service Reform Association believed a public official ought to be. Sam Johnson has also been active in the National Guard, and has brought his company to a point of efficiency and drill that any man might be proud of. And there has been criticism that particularly his political activities must take the time that ought to be devoted to his road supervising duties. But the reply to this might very well be along the lines of President Lincoln's reply to the critics of General Grant that he drank too much whiskey. To these Lincoln replied that he wished they would furnish him with a supply of the brand that Grant used, so that he could supply his other generals with it. If Sam Johnson's political activities have any relation to his efficiency as a road supervisor, Governor Carter might well seek some more men of similar political activity for appointment to important office.

At a time when funds have been at as low an ebb as ever they were, the road department has accomplished more than it ever did before. This is alike a credit to Governor Carter's administration, and to the efficiency of Road Supervisor Sam Johnson.

When Does a Man Become White?

It was one of the difficulties of logic, which African slavery in the South met, to draw the line where a person of mixed African and Caucasian blood, ceased to be an African and therefore a chattel, and became a Caucasian and therefore a man. Mark Twain in his story of "Pudd'n Head Wilson," has in his usual forcible way shown the incongruity and grim humor of the proposition. But the question arose and it had to be settled, and the courts of the South decided that if a man had one sixteenth of African blood in his veins, he was a negro and a slave. But if he had no more than one-thirty-second of African blood, he was a white man and free. However humorous this may appear as a subtle academic distinction, there is a grimness in it not apparent on the face of it. This quality appears in the fact that it is stated on very good medical and ethnological authority that there never was a person of the sixteenth Negro blood, let alone one of the thirty-second, Nature in one of her cynical moods refusing to go further with the hybridizing process than the eighth. If this is so the grim humor of the courts' distinction is, that the possibility of a person of Negro lineage reaching the status of a Caucasian under the old slavery regime, was a tantalizing hope, never to be realized.

While the question of mixed blood in its relation to slavery, has happily been forever settled in America, the same question in a little different form has arisen in two of the British colonies. In the Commonwealth of Australia a bounty is paid for sugar grown by white labor, the law providing that the grower as well as the mere laborers must be white. Now the question has arisen as to what constitutes a person white so as to be eligible to secure the sugar bounty. The question has arisen over a claim of a man for bounty, who describes himself as the son of a white man and a half-caste or half-white woman. His claim that his mother is a half-caste has been disputed, but the minister through whose department the bounties are paid, and who must in the first instance decide the question has held that the man must first satisfactorily prove that his mother is a half-caste, and then he will take up the question of whether, even if she is, that constitutes the son a white man within the meaning of the bounty laws.

The question has arisen in a little different form in the Crown Colony of Fiji. The British Government has just issued letters patent establishing for the first time in this colony a small measure of representative government. The letters patent define who shall have the right to vote, and provide that certain white persons of property and residence qualifications and persons of certain degrees of mixed blood, possessing the other necessary qualifications may vote. But in the application of these definitions relating to mixed blood, difficulties have arisen, and the governor of the colony has undertaken to decide. He has decided that a person one of whose parents is a white person and the other a full-blooded Fijian, such person being of the half blood, may not vote, though a person both of whose parents are of the half blood may vote. One of the questions which yet remain to be settled is whether a person both of whose parents are of mixed Fijian and white blood, though they may be less than half-white blood, are entitled to vote. If this question is decided in the affirmative, it is possible that the old dictum of the South, so far as the fraction of the blood is concerned, may be reversed and a person mixed of Fijian and white blood, but with only one thirty-second of white blood, if Nature will go that far in the diluting process may have all the political rights of a white man, while his brother of sixteen thirty-seconds of white blood, but a different process of admixture is denied those rights.

When it comes to basing political or other rights on distictions of race or blood, Nature has a way of raising some curious complications.

Evidently there are people on the mainland who want our Territorial bonds.

There is something brutal and revolting in the treatment accorded to Mrs. Chadwick by the Cleveland mob. Whatever her crimes, the probabilities are that she never injured any of those who formed the mob. The mob was doubtless composed of men who raven at misfortune whether that misfortune follows good or evell doings. Mobs are seldom composed of our best citizens, though "our best citizens" have been given credit of late for a good many lynchings. The mob spirit is the wolfish spirit.

The ministerial crisis in Spain is only an incident of the struggle that is going on in that country between the progressive party by whatever name it is called, and the reactionaries and ultra-conservatives. The Spanish-American war by destroying Spain's over-the-sea empire, awoke the nation to a better realization of the true interests of the Spanish people. These interests did not lie in the distant islands which they had plundered and debauched, but which in turn had been the cause of corrupting and enfeebling her best sons. They did lie in the internal development of the resources of Spain, and the bettering of the condition of the Spanish people. But Spain has been too long wedded to her idols of militarism and dreams of aggrandizement, to readily accept a lesson so humiliating to the kind of pride with which as a nation she has been puffed up. The struggle between the old dreams and the hard realities of the present is one that will see many ministries rise and fall before it is finally settled.

The Japanese have now apparently accomplished, what they hoped they had accomplished at the very outset of the war—destroyed the Russian Port Arthur fleet. The vitality of that arm of the Russian service, notwithstanding it was not a very active vitality, has proven one of the most effective elements of the Russian strategy, inasmuch as it has kept the Japanese fleet chained to the locality of Port Arthur, and prevented its activity elsewhere. The astonishing ability the Russians have shown in repairing their vessels inside Port Arthur, has also been one of the creditable and redeeming features of their campaign. Though the repairs they made to the vessels that were damaged by Togo's first onslaught at the very beginning of the war did not avail, through other circumstances, to enable the fleet to get out on the high seas and accomplish fighting there, it did avail to put them into such a potential position as that the Japanese fleet could not be withdrawn from Port Arthur. Japan seems to be progressing in her plans for fighting Russia, notwithstanding the fact that critics in some places are severely blaming them for not having already reduced Port Arthur and overwhelmed Kuropatkin.

Lemuel Clarke Davis affords an illustration of the advantage of a good choice of wife and child. He chose Rebecca Harding for his wife and Richard Harding Davis for his son, and when he died the fact of his death was telegraphed and cabled all over the world.

T. H. Cunningham president of the Rural Carrier's Association and J. A. Kellar the head of the National Carrier's Electioneering Committee whom President Roosevelt has removed from their public jobs, were probably more active in politics to increase their pay than they were in the service to deliver letters.